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ABSTRACT

This study measures the success of the implementation of a Cooperative Learning Environment program and presents the results of that program as carried out in three elementary schools and two secondary schools in San Diego, by replicating studies conducted elsewhere in the United States. Whereas the earlier studies document the positive effects of such programs on achievement of the desired outcomes of integration (such as cross-ethnic friendships) and on academic learning, results in the San Diego study did not find similar statistical differences. Possible reasons for the lack of results from pre- to postprogram implementation in San Diego are: (1) pretest scores were high; (2) districts in other studies did not have the same kind of integration and race/human relations background as San Diego; (3) inconsistent implementation; and (4) the short time of implementation. The following are recommended: (1) a more rigorous implementation over a longer period of time; (2) that teachers new to the program be well taught in the use of cooperative learning strategies, and be given sustained in-class resource support, recognition, and support by the site administration; (3) that recognition be given to and use made of role model teachers expert in using cooperative learning environment methods; and (4) that the program be evaluated rigorously, including monitoring of implementation. (RDN)

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San Diego City Schools

EVALUATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

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EVALUATION OF THE RACE/HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAM: A STUDY OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

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PLANNING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION DIVISION

EVALUATION OF RACE/HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAM: A STUDY OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES

1983-84

by
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July 1984

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EVALUATION OF RACE/HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAM:
A STUDY OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES
1983-84

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Issue/Concern:

During the 1983-84 school year, the district field tested and evaluated a program of Cooperative Learning Environment in response to the Superintendent's Integration Objective 4, the Community Relations and Integration Objective 3 and the Race/Human Relations Program Objective 17. This study measures the success of the implementation and the results of that program in three elementary schools and two secondary schools by replicating studies conducted elsewhere in the nation which have shown success in using cooperative learning strategies.

Recommendations:

- Support a more rigorous implementation over a longer period of time wherever it is being used.
- Insure that teachers new to the program are well taught in the use of the strategies. Give teachers sustained in-class resource support in the form of demonstration lessons and in-class assistance from race/human relations facilitators and/or mentor teachers. Insure that teachers are given recognition and support by the site administration.
- Give recognition to and use as role models teachers who have expertise in the use of Cooperative Learning Environment.
- Support a rigorous evaluation of the program, including implementation monitoring.

Rationale:

Research reports on the effects of students learning in a cooperative learning environment document the positive effects of such learning on achieving the desired outcomes of integration as well as improved academic learning. Results in this district did not find the same statistical differences as in other studies. Research results in other areas of the country indicate that implementation would promote the aims of the San Diego Plan for Racial Integration and equip teachers with a successful strategy for teaching heterogenously grouped classes. A possible reason for lack of results from pre to post is that pretest scores were high, and other districts did not have the integration and race/human relations background. Inconsistent implementation and the short time of implementation are at least as strong as other reasons for the lack of results in the San Diego field test. Implementation was not complete at the secondary level. Although more regular implementation occurred at the elementary level, it was still conducted only for a short period of time.

Budget Implications:

There should be few budget implications in implementing Cooperative Learning Environment. Some expenses may be incurred through inservice training for teachers, in the purchase of materials, and in the design and execution of an evaluation plan. Rather than a new program, it is an effective instructional strategy for use with existing curricula.

Policy Implications:

Implementation of successful cooperative learning strategies supports policies for elimination of harmful practices and promotes integration policies. The Board and the Superintendent have already expressed their support for the Cooperative Learning Environment as a means of promoting the desirable outcomes of integration.

I.
INTRODUCTION

Background

"Cooperative Learning Environment" refers to a series of instructional techniques developed at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Michigan, School of Education. The techniques are research-based and have been implemented and evaluated in schools throughout the United States. The basic idea behind cooperative learning techniques is that when students at any grade level learn in small, carefully structured learning teams and are rewarded for working toward a common goal, they help one another learn, gain in self-esteem and feelings of individual responsibility for their learning, and increase in respect and liking for their classmates, including those of different races, gender, and abilities. Cooperative Learning Environment (hereinafter referred to as CLE) is a system of teaching/learning strategies which seek to harness the competitive spirit of the athletic field, direct it toward the academic tasks of the classroom, and forge more positive racial/human relationships. There is extensive literature to support the claims of CLE.*

During the 1983-84 school year, the district supported the implementation of a program of CLE and its evaluation in response to the superintendent's Integration Objective 4 and the Community Relations and Integration Services Division Objective 3, which reads:

> "Develop and facilitate management of at least five cooperative learning programs at the elementary level."

Additionally, the implementation of CLE in 1983-84 gave support to this year's Race/Human Relations Program Objective 17, which reads:

> "Demonstrate knowledge about the rationale and methodology for Student Team Learning and Cooperative Learning. Analyze current practice and, where indicated, implement procedures to insure, for students, content area instruction which utilizes this research-based integration strategy."

*An extensive review of the literature has been prepared by Mr. Terry Scott of the Staff Development Division. This review is included in the technical report available from the Evaluation Department.

Purpose of the Study

The study was designed to investigate the academic and social effects of Cooperative Learning Environments on students attending ethnically diverse schools in the district. The following questions provided specific direction for the study:

1. Will students choose more cross-ethnic friendships as a result of participating in a cooperative learning environment?

2. Will students reject academic teammates of differing ethnic groups less often as a result of participating in interdependent learning?

3. Will student self-esteem improve as a result of participating in cooperative learning?

4. Will the use of a cooperative learning environment have a significant effect on student achievement?

5. Will students' perception of classroom environment change as a result of participating in a cooperative learning environment?

Design of the Study

Teachers in selected schools agreed to participate in the study. To create as little disruption of classes as possible, their classes, not individual students, were randomly assigned to treatment and comparison groups. Within the treatment classes, students were assigned to groups which were mixed by ethnicity, gender, and achievement levels. These treatment classes were pretested, treated, and posttested. Comparison classes were pretested and posttested only. Figure 1 presents a conceptual model of the study's design. The program began in November and ended in January.

The Sample

A total of twelve classes participated in the study. Eight of these were elementary classes at three schools: Fremont, Encanto, and Hamilton; two were junior high classes at Wilson and two were senior high classes at Patrick Henry. These classrooms were selected by the Community Relations and Integration Services Division based, in part, on the willingness of school principals and teachers to participate in the study. At each school an equal number of treatment and comparison classes were randomly selected, assigned from those willing to be a part of the study. In the secondary schools, both the treatment and comparison classes were taught by the same teacher while at the elementary level each class had a different teacher.

There were 509 elementary students in grades 4-6 and 295 junior and senior high school students. Tables 1, 2, and 3 give the number and percentage of these students by ethnicity.

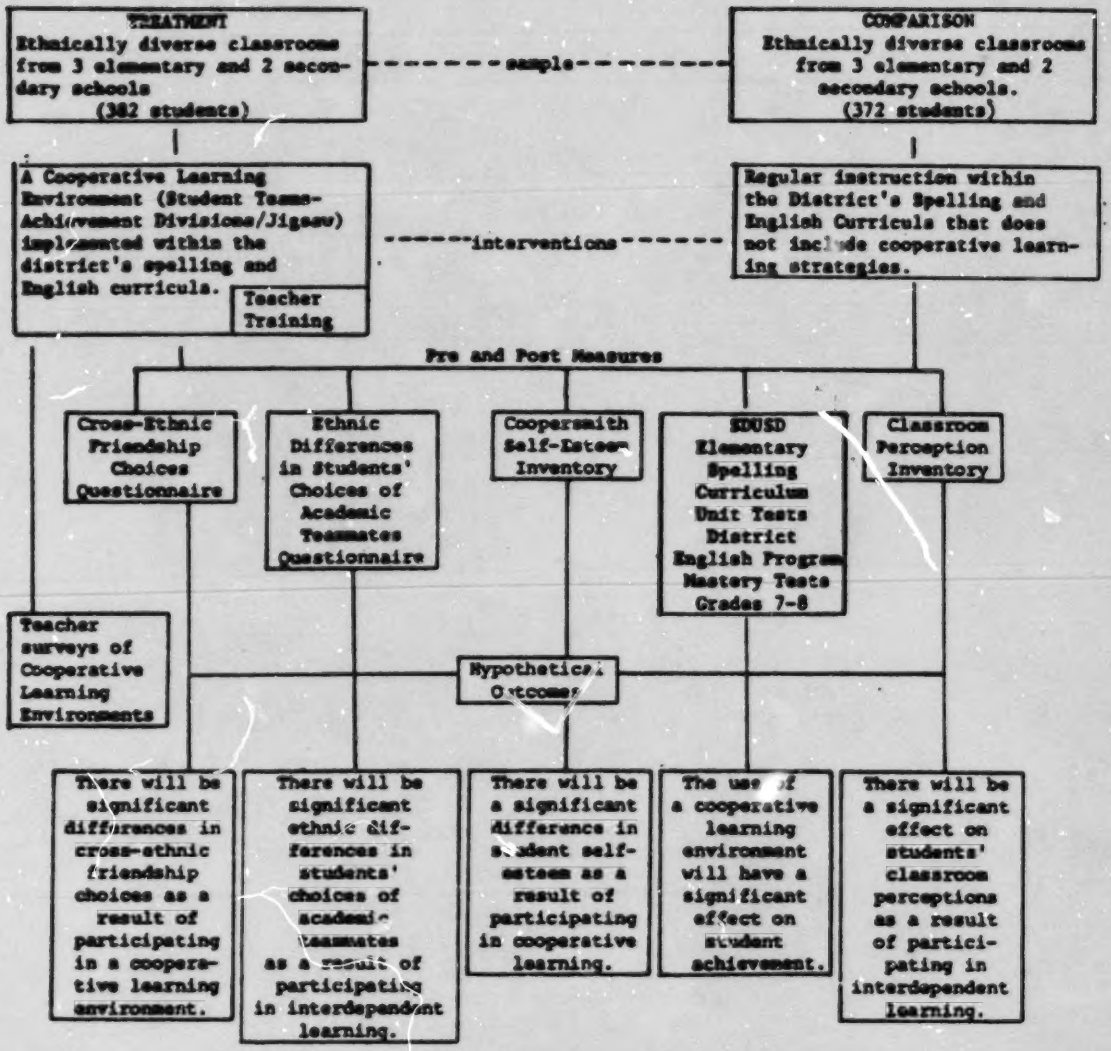
TREATMENT
Ethnically diverse classrooms from 3 elementary and 2 secondary schools (382 students)
sample
COMPARISON
Ethnically diverse classrooms from 3 elementary and 2 secondary schools. (372 students)
A Cooperative Learning Environment (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions/Jigsaw) implemented within the district's spelling and English curricula.
Teacher Training
interventions
Regular instruction within the District's Spelling and English Curricula that does not include cooperative learning strategies.
Pre and Post Measures
Cross-Ethnic Friendship Choices Questionnaire
Ethnic Differences in Students' Choices of Academic Teammates Questionnaire
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory
EDUSD Elementary Spelling Curriculum Unit Tests
District English Program Mastery Tests Grades 7-8
Classroom Perception Inventory
Teacher surveys of Cooperative Learning Environments
Hypothetical Outcomes
There will be significant differences in cross-ethnic friendship choices as a result of participating in a cooperative learning environment.
There will be significant ethnic differences in students' choices of academic teammates as a result of participating in interdependent learning.
There will be a significant difference in student self-esteem as a result of participating in cooperative learning.
The use of a cooperative learning environment will have a significant effect on student achievement.
There will be a significant effect on students' classroom perceptions as a result of participating in interdependent learning.

Figure 1

The Academic and Social Effects of Cooperative Learning Environments on Ethnically Diverse Schools: A Conceptual Model

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Table 1

Composition of the Sample
Elementary

	Treatment Group N	Treatment Group %	Control Group N	Control Group %
Hispanic	45	18	47	19
White	119	46	115	46
Black	67	26	61	24
Asian	8	3	11	4
Other	18	7	18	7
Totals	257	100	252	100

Table 2

Composition of the Sample
Junior High

	Treatment Group N	Treatment Group %	Control Group N	Control Group %
Hispanic	14	24	16	28
White	25	43	23	40
Black	10	17	8	14
Asian	-	-	2	4
Other	9	16	8	14
Totals	58	100	57	100

Table 3

Composition of the Sample
Senior High

	Treatment Group N	Treatment Group %	Control Group N	Control Group %
Hispanic	8	12	8	12
White	47	70	49	77
Black	10	15	3	7
Asian	-	-	1	1
Other	2	3	2	3
Totals	67	100	63	100

Treatment

Cooperative Learning Environments (CLE) model. The CLE models used in this study are based on the theory of cooperative goal structuring. Hollifield and Slavin (1981) have identified the following elements as unifying concepts in interdependent learning: (1) students work together in structured teams to accomplish a task; (2) each student on the team has the opportunity to contribute to the team's academic success; and (3) each student on the team is individually accountable for learning. This study incorporates two cooperative methods of learning: Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) and Jigsaw.

Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD). At the elementary level, treatment classrooms used the cooperative learning method STAD which is comprised of five interlocking components: class presentations, teams, quizzes, individual improvement scores, and team recognition (Slavin, 1981). Class presentations within STAD consist of the academic material introduced by the teacher or through other modes of delivery, such as a guest lecture or instructional media. Teams of four to five students interact in practice sessions following the class presentations. These teams are balanced by ethnicity, gender, and achievement levels.

In team practice sessions, the students learn together by reviewing the material the teacher presents. This learning might include studying worksheets, working problems, explaining difficulties and otherwise helping one another master the material. Equality of teammates is emphasized by structuring the practice sessions so that students are asked to learn together and be responsible for one another's learning. STAD does not assign roles as tutors or tutorees to the team members.

Following teacher presentation and team practice, students take individual quizzes on the material they have been studying. Because students are not permitted to assist one another on quizzes, students have the individual responsibility to know the material.

Team scores, the fourth component of STAD, reward students for doing better than they have done in the past. A "base" score based on past quiz scores is assigned to each student. This "base" score serves as the minimum level the student is expected to achieve. Teams accrue points based on how much the current quiz scores exceed the total of the individual base scores. The base score is changed every two weeks to reflect changes in performance level. The use of individual improvement scores is twofold. First, it places high scores within reach of every student; second, it equalizes the potential contribution to the team score by each team member. This reduces the chance for peer rejection based on a student diminishing the overall team score.

Jigsaw. At the secondary level, the cooperative learning method, Jigsaw, was used in the treatment classrooms. In Jigsaw, students are assigned to heterogeneous six-person learning groups. Each team member receives a topic or portion of an assignment on which he/she must become the "expert" in order to teach the other members of the group. Students from different teams who have the same topic form "competent groups" or "expert groups" in which they read and discuss the assignment prior to teaching their respective groups. Jigsaw holds

each student responsible for a unique and vital part of the information and establishes an interdependency among students for information.

Instrumentation

Cross-ethnic friendship choices. To answer the question of whether students would make more cross-ethnic friendship choices as a result of participating in a cooperative learning environment, students were pre- and posttested with the question, "Who are your best friends in class?" Class lists were attached to the questionnaire so that students would not omit names because of difficulty in spelling them. The results were analyzed by an item analysis according to ethnicity using chi-square. Data were classified by pre/post and treatment/comparison responses.

Ethnic choices of academic teammates. To address the question of whether students would choose academic teammates of different ethnic groups as a consequence of participating in interdependent learning, student responses to the question "If you were going to be working on a spelling or language project with other students, which students would you not want to have in your group?" were examined. Again, class lists were attached to the questionnaire. Student responses were analyzed for ethnic differences in choice using chi-square. Data were classified by treatment and comparison groups.

Self-Esteem. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was administered pre/post to assess whether student self-esteem would improve as a result of participating in cooperative learning. The resulting data were analyzed pre/post by treatment/comparison groups. As one way analysis of variance on the pretest revealed no significance in group scores, the same measure was applied to the posttest. Had significant difference been found on the pretest, analysis of covariance would have been necessary. Treatment effects were further analyzed by ethnicity.

Achievement. To answer the question of whether the use of a cooperative learning environment would have a significant effect on student achievement, participants were tested. District spelling tests comprised the measure at the elementary level, and pre- and posttest from Unit A of the English Language unit were used at the junior high level. No satisfactory method was agreed upon by teachers to measure achievement at the senior high level.

Classroom perceptions. The instrument Classroom Perception Inventory was administered pre/post to test the hypothesis that students' classroom perceptions would change as a result of participating in interdependent learning. Data were analyzed pre/post and by treatment/comparison. Again, as pretest data were found not to be significantly different from treatment to control classes, one-way analysis of variance was carried out on the posttest. Treatment outcomes were broken down by ethnicity and analyzed by a one-way analysis of variance.

All instruments and techniques used have been employed numerous times elsewhere, and their validity and reliability have been established.

II.
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS*

Implementation Evaluation

The following efforts comprised a check for quality implementation of the program:

1. To insure proper implementation of the study design, Race/Human Relations Facilitators were scheduled to teach the first week of the implementation, observe the second week, and make weekly visitations throughout the study. At the secondary level, classroom conditions, teacher needs, and other conditions made the exact following of the plan more difficult.

2. A teacher checklist was devised and implemented to give the teachers a chance to give advice and suggestions while reminding them of the factors of Cooperative Learning Environment which should be kept in mind.

3. Elementary principals, secondary vice principals, program evaluators, and program evaluation aides conducted classroom observations of treatment classes. No comparison classes were observed.

4. Interviews of teachers and school administrators gave an indication of the regularity of the use of the techniques of CLE.

5. We consulted with Dr. Robert Slavin, from Johns Hopkins University who has published research on Cooperative Learning, particularly in the Baltimore area. He gave advice and consent on the use of instrumentation, discussed his findings in other studies, and expressed a keen interest in our study.

At the elementary level, those teachers who continued in the program carried out a high quality implementation. Two teachers dropped out of the program for acceptable reasons. Implementation was less complete or virtually non-existent at the secondary levels. Some teachers felt the program an imposition in that they did not see it as fitting their plans; and interest was not as high among the teachers at the secondary level.

At the end of the program, elementary teachers expressed much greater enthusiasm than did the secondary teachers. At Encanto School, for instance, the staff decided upon a program of Cooperative Learning Environment to be implemented in the remaining part of the spring semester. At the secondary level, there were

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*A technical report has been prepared under separate cover. It contains an extensive review of the literature which has examined cooperative learning programs, the instrumentation used in this study, and the detailed statistical tables showing the results of the measures.

teachers using in the program who were not part of this study; future programs should make better use of their expertise and enthusiasm.

Outcomes of the Study

Question 1--Cross-Ethnic Friendship Choices

Question one asked, "Will students choose more cross-ethnic friendships as a result of participating in a cooperative learning environment?" Cross-ethnic choices occur when the student chooses as a friend someone of an ethnicity other than his/her own. Students were grouped under five different ethnicities: Hispanic, White, Black, Asian, and Other.

At the elementary level, those students in treatment classes chose more cross-ethnic friendships in four of five cases: White, Black, Asian, and Other. In the case of the Hispanic students the students in the comparison classes chose other ethnicities more often. None of these differences were at statistically significant levels; that is, they could just as well have happened by chance.

The same results were found at the junior high and senior high school levels. At the junior high level, three of four ethnicities chose more cross-ethnic friendships in treatment vs. comparison classes, while one ethnicity chose more cross-ethnic friendships in the comparison classes. For one group--Asian--there were not enough students to compute the measure. The same results held for the senior high group: in three of four instances, treatment classes chose more cross-ethnic friendships than comparison. In one instance--Black students--the difference was significant.

Cross ethnic friendship choices were not statistically different from comparison to treatment groups.

Question 2--Cross-Ethnic Choices of Undesirable Academic Workmates

The question, was "Will students reject academic teammates of differing ethnic groups less often as a result of participating in interdependent learning?"

Once again, no significant gain was made on pre-post measurement for treatment students vs. comparison students. In most cases, students in treatment classes did have slightly more positive results than students in comparison classes.

Question 3 - Self-Esteem

In this instance, we tried to determine if student self-esteem would improve as a result of participating in cooperative learning. The "Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory" measured self-esteem of students before and after the period of CLE for treatment classes and comparison classes. On the Coopersmith, there is a possible total score of 126. The statistical procedure "Analysis of Variance" was used to determine if any differences were significant. The only test which revealed a significant change was that for the pre/post comparison students at

the elementary level. There were no other statistically significant differences. The scores sometimes go up from pre to post, sometimes down; sometimes the treatment scores are higher, sometimes lower.

In effect, we cannot say that for these students cooperative learning improved self-esteem.

Question 4 - Academic Achievement

Here the question was, "Will the use of a cooperative learning environment have a significant effect on student achievement?" At the elementary level, spelling test scores were used as a measure of comparison. On six of nine spelling tests, the treatment classes showed greater improvement than the comparison classes, but the increase was not statistically significant according to t-test results on the differences in gain scores. At the junior high school level, scores of mastery tests on English Language Units were used as a measure. No significant results were found. There was no measure available at the senior high school level for measuring differences in achievement of treatment vs. control classes.

There were not statistically significant achievement gains.

Question 5 - Perception of Classroom Environment

We used a widely known instrument called the "Classroom Perception Inventory" to determine if the perception of classroom atmosphere would improve more for treatment classes than comparison classes.

Once again, there were no differences in treatment versus comparison classes at any grade level.

Conditions Affecting the Outcomes

This study focused on five major questions. These questions are related to areas where changes have been found to occur in many other studies of Cooperative Learning Environment. No differences appeared in any of these areas where changes occurred in other studies. Given that statistical differences were not found in San Diego in a program which has been shown to be effective elsewhere, we must examine why.

Certain conditions in the San Diego City Schools may have contributed to statistical outcomes which vary from the ones obtained in other Cooperative Learning Environment studies.

Unlike any other district studied, San Diego City School District has been under a court order to integrate since 1976. The Race/Human Relations Program resulting from that court order could affect student outcomes in this study.

Most earlier studies were done in schools with primarily two ethnic groups (Black and White), while the student population in San Diego Schools is diverse.

The pretest scores for cross-ethnic choices, self-esteem, and classroom perception inventories for this study are higher than in other studies of CLE according to Dr. Slavin. San Diego students showed positive choices in self-esteem, cross-ethnic friendships and classroom perceptions on the pretest. Having a base of cross-ethnic interaction to begin with results in fewer distinctions in either pre/post data or treatment/comparison groups.

Another factor affecting the outcomes could be the time students actually spent in CLE activities. The length of the program was eight weeks. During that time, elementary students spent 15-20 minutes per day, four days a week in CLE activities (480-640 minutes total). At the secondary level the CLE class was but one out of five classes per day and in that participating class CLE activities did not occur every day.

III.
CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study lead to the following conclusions:

1. The success of the Cooperative Learning Environment program depends upon sustained, systematic, and rigorous implementation. In those classrooms where the program was implemented as outlined in the plan, enthusiasm over the possibilities was evident, both among the students and the staff. Where the program was implemented reluctantly, results were mixed and feelings of success were not substantial. Speaking at a conference in San Diego on "Creating Effective Schools" on May 18, 1984, Spencer Kagan of the University of California at Riverside emphasized that CLE demands a high level of expertise in classroom management and in the various strategies of cooperative learning. Proper implementation of cooperative learning strategies requires indepth inservice and classroom follow-up. Follow-up must include modeling and coaching accompanied by observation and feedback by appropriate resource people, such as race/human relations facilitators and/or mentor teachers.

2. Vigorous implementation of the program is worthwhile from the standpoint of improved race/human relations, improved self-esteem, and improved achievement based on known results of CLE. There is evidence that existing pre-treatment conditions tended to preclude statisically evident results in the short period of this study.

3. Achievement in CLE is as great or greater than other teaching strategies. Furthermore, the strategies fit comfortably with the Achievement Goals Program, the various magnet school philosophies, and the philosophy of enhancing basic skill achievement. Two of the program schools, Fremont and Encanto, have been magnet schools for seven years with philosophies supporting the tenets of integration and race/human relations: Fremont and Encanto. Additionally, three of the schools are in the Achievement Goals Program. The teaching strategies of CLE are compatible with AGP and worked well in those schools.

4. Continued careful and involved evaluation of the program is necessary. Evaluation should be expanded to include qualitative evaluation which would document the day-to-day reality and results of the program.

IV.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are deemed appropriate in light of the results of the study.

1. Support a more rigorous implementation over a longer period of time wherever it is being used. It is worth doing well. Determine the necessary inservice training; insure that details of implementation strategies are carried out; and maintain evident site and district leadership and support.

2. Insure that teachers new to the program are well taught in the use of the strategies. Give teachers sustained in-class resource support in the form of demonstration lessons and assistance from race/human relations facilitators, mentor teachers or resource teachers. Insure that teachers are given recognition and support by the site administration.

3. Give recognition to and use as role models teachers who have expertise in the use of Cooperative Learning Environment. If possible, use the Mentor Teacher program to promote and enhance implementation. Give public recognition to the efforts of facilitators and school site personnel who are successfully carrying out the program. Identify any other possible resources for support.

4. Support a rigorous evaluation of the program, including monitoring of implementation. While quantitiative measures of the program should be continued, there are qualitative--particularly ethnographic--methods of observation, documentation, and validation which will add credence to the claims of the program's positive contribution to the Integration Program and the Race/Human Relations Program.